

MARSH AND DELTA AREAS

Planning Context

Solano County contains extensive marshlands critical to the health and vitality of the estuary ecosystem in the San Francisco Bay and Sacramento–San Joaquin Delta (Bay-Delta). The county is home to the largest contiguous brackish water marsh remaining on the west coast of North America and encompasses more than 10 percent of California's remaining natural wetlands. These areas provide habitat for a diverse number of species and also provide valuable ecosystem services. The county's marsh and Delta areas serve as the resting and feeding ground for thousands of waterfowl migrating on the Pacific Flyway and support 80 percent of the state's commercial salmon fishery by providing important tidal rearing areas for juvenile fish.

Related Plans, Programs, and Agencies

This section describes the plans, programs, and legislative acts that direct Solano County in the protection of its marshes and Delta area. The General Plan must be consistent with these, as well as with the implementation programs referenced below.

Suisun Marsh Protection Act

In 1974, the California Legislature passed the Suisun Marsh Protection Act, designed to preserve Suisun Marsh from residential, commercial, and industrial development. The act directs BCDC and DFG to prepare a protection plan for Suisun Marsh "to preserve the integrity and assure continued wildlife use" of the marsh. The objectives of the protection plan are to preserve and enhance the quality and diversity of the Suisun Marsh's aquatic and wildlife habitats and to ensure retention of upland areas adjacent to the marsh in uses compatible with its protection.

Suisun Marsh Local Protection Program

Under the Suisun Marsh Protection Act, Solano County and other agencies having jurisdiction within the Suisun Marsh were required to bring their policies, regulations, programs and operating procedures into conformity with the provision of the Suisun Marsh Protection Act and the Suisun Marsh Protection Plan through the preparation of a Local Protection Program. Solano County's component of the Local Protection Program includes, General Plan policies and other policies, programs and regulations to preserve and enhance the wildlife habitat of the Suisun Marsh and to assure retention of upland areas adjacent to the marsh in uses compatible with its protection.

Delta Protection Act

The Delta Protection Act of 1992 established the Delta Protection Commission (DPC). DPC is a state agency with jurisdiction over the Primary Zone of the Delta, which is located in five counties: Solano, Yolo, Sacramento, San Joaquin, and Contra Costa. DPC is charged with the task of preparing a regional plan to address land uses and resource management for the Delta area. Key land uses identified in the legislation include agriculture, wildlife habitat, and recreation. DPC adopted its *Land Use and Resource Management Plan for the Primary Zone of the Delta* on February 23, 1995. The plan was forwarded to the five counties for incorporation into their general plans and zoning ordinances. The counties will then carry out the plan through their day-to-day activities.

White Slough Specific Plan

In 1991 the McAteer-Petris Act was amended to authorize the development of a specific area plan for White Slough by the City of Vallejo and Solano County. The *White Slough Specific Plan* aims to provide orderly, long-range conservation, use, and management of the natural, scenic, and recreational resources of White Slough. The plan includes the permanent protection and enhancement of 336 acres of tidal wetlands within White Slough and 132 acres of tidally influenced areas in South White Slough. The plan limits fill to 13 acres or less related to improvements of SR 37. The plan also aims to provide flood protection to upland areas and provide water quality protection and enhancement measures.

Napa Sonoma Marsh Restoration Project

In a collaborative effort, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the California Coastal Conservancy, and DFG are managing a restoration project for 9,460 acres of wetlands and associated habitats within the former Cargill salt pond complex located to the north and northwest of Mare Island in Solano, Napa, and Sonoma Counties. The project will protect and enhance extensive habitat for endangered species, migratory waterfowl and shorebirds, and fish and other aquatic species; improve water quality and productivity in the Napa River and San Francisco Bay; and provide open space and recreational opportunities.

Delta Vision and Strategic Plan

Delta Vision is a state-sponsored process that intends to identify a strategy for managing the Sacramento–San Joaquin Delta as a sustainable ecosystem that would continue to support the environmental and economic functions critical to the people of California.

The Delta Strategic Plan will contain implementation recommendations of the Delta Vision Committee including changes in the use of land and water resources, services to be provided within the Delta, governance, funding mechanisms and ecosystem management practices. The final Delta Strategic Plan will be submitted to the Governor and Legislature by December 31, 2008. The 2008 Solano County General Plan may need to

General Marsh-Delta Policies

- RS.P-7: Preserve and enhance the diversity of habitats in marshes, delta to maintain these unique wildlife resources.
- RS.P-8: Protect marsh waterways, managed wetlands, tidal marshes, seasonal marshes, and lowland and grasslands because they are critical habitats for marsh-related wildlife and are essential to the integrity of the marshes.
- RS.P-9: Encourage restoration of historic marshes to wetland status, either as tidal marshes or managed wetlands. When managed wetlands are no longer used for waterfowl hunting, restore them as tidal marshes.

Suisun Marsh Policies

The Marsh designation has been applied to the Suisun Marsh on the Land Use Diagram. This designation is designed to preserve and enhance the quality and diversity of marsh habitats. Uses in marsh designated areas should be restricted to aquatic and wildlife habitat; marsh-oriented recreational uses; agricultural activities compatible with the marsh environment and which protect the habitat value of marsh areas; and educational and scientific research opportunities and resources.

The Primary Management Area as established in the Suisun Preservation Act of 1977 is shown in Figure RS-3. This area consists of tidal marshes, seasonal marshes, managed wetlands, and lowland grasslands. It is the intent for this area to remain in its existing marsh and related uses as provided for in the Suisun Marsh Local Protection Program. The Secondary Management area established in the 1977 Act and shown in Figure RS-3 is designated for agricultural use. This area consists of upland grasslands and agricultural lands and serves as a significant buffer to the wetland areas. The Secondary Management Area is designed to assure retention of upland areas adjacent to the marsh in uses compatible with its protection as provided for in the Suisun Marsh Local Protection Program. The County has applied Marsh Preservation and Limited Agricultural zoning districts to the Primary and Secondary Management Areas, consistent with the General Plan.

In addition to the Suisun Marsh, a number of important habitat areas also exist along the county's significant water courses. The plan seeks to preserve the water quality and riparian habitat of these watercourses through the control of erosion, sedimentation and runoff resulting from adjacent use and development.

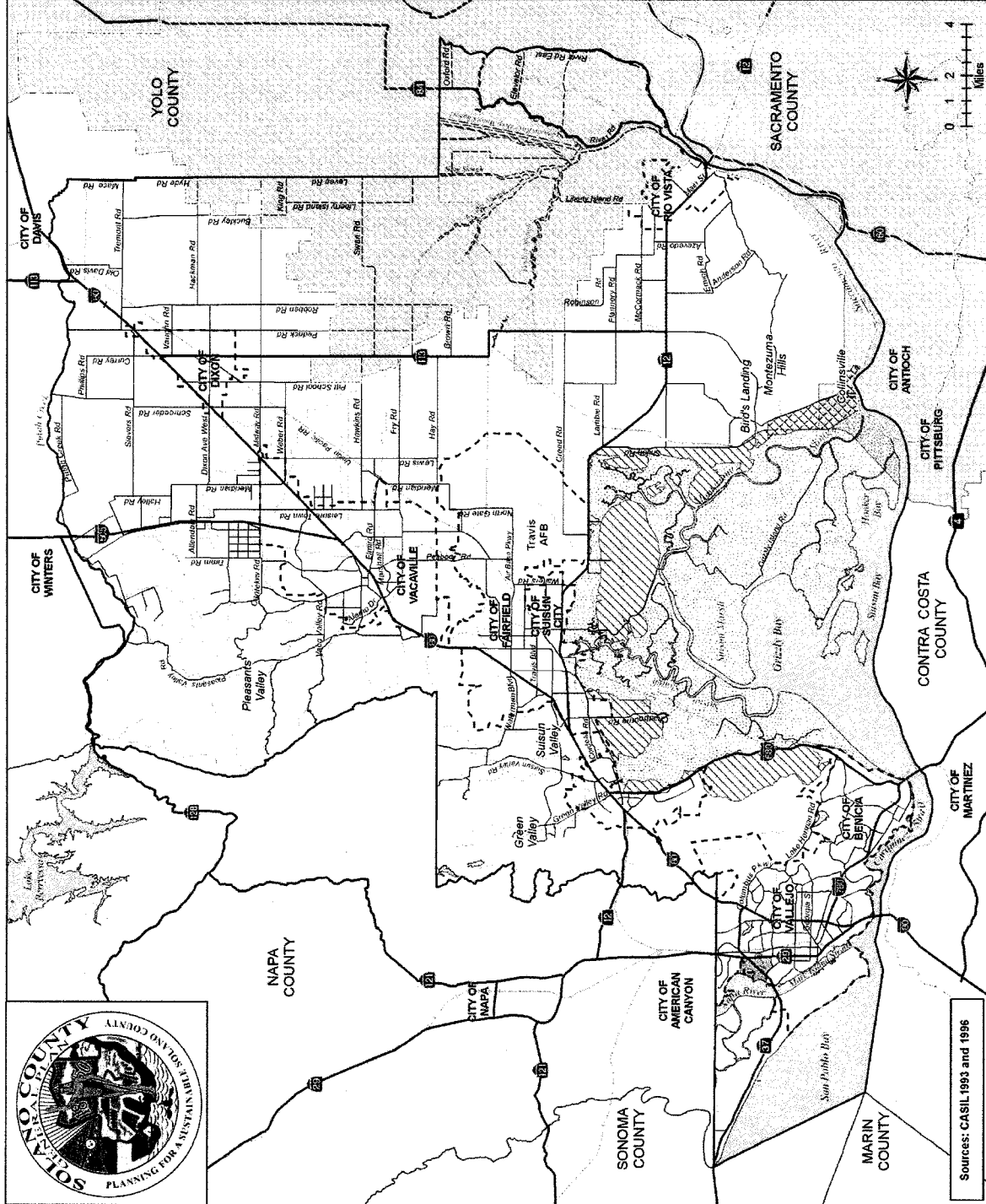
Solano County General Plan

Figure RS-3

Delta and Marsh Protection Areas

Legend

- White Slough Planning Area
- Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Protection Areas
- Delta Primary Zone
- Legal Delta
- Suisun Marsh Protection Areas
- Primary Management Area
- Secondary Management Area
- Water Related Industry Reserve Area
- Basemap Layers
- Roadways
- Highways
- Railroads
- Streams and Creeks
- Major Water Features
- Municipal Service Areas
- Adjacent Counties



Sources: CASIL 1993 and 1996

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Areas west of I-680 and outside the boundaries of the City of Fairfield are excluded from the land use restrictions which the Act places upon the buffer, except for watercourse protection and erosion and sediment control provisions.

Under the Suisun Marsh Local Protection Program, all public and private management and development activities within the Primary and Secondary Management areas of the Suisun Marsh shall be consistent with the policies and provisions of the Suisun Marsh Protection Plan as adopted by the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission. The Marsh designation in the Water Related Industry Reserve area, a part of the secondary management area of the Suisun Marsh Protection Plan, will be managed in the same fashion as if it were a part of the primary management area of the Suisun Marsh Protection Plan.

The following policies are a part of the County's component of the Suisun Marsh Local Protection Program. More specific General Plan policies in the Local Protect Program that apply to the Suisun Marsh area are provided in Appendix C.

The following policies apply specifically to the Suisun Marsh area. These policies are more specific than the balance of the General Plan to address the requirements of the *Suisun Marsh Protection Plan* and the Suisun Marsh Protection Act of 1977.

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| RS.P-10: | The County shall preserve and enhance wherever possible the diversity of wildlife and aquatic habitats found in the Suisun Marsh and surrounding upland areas to maintain these unique wildlife resources. |
| RS.P-11: | The County shall protect its marsh waterways, managed and natural wetlands, tidal marshes, seasonal marshes and lowland grasslands which are critical habitats for marsh-related wildlife. |
| RS.P-12: | Existing uses should continue in the upland grasslands and cultivated areas surrounding the critical habitats of the Suisun Marsh in order to protect the Marsh and preserve valuable marsh-related wildlife habitats. Where feasible, the value of the upland grasslands and cultivated lands as habitat for marsh-related wildlife should be enhanced. |
| RS.P-13: | Agriculture within the Primary Management Area of the Suisun Marsh should be limited to activities compatible with, or intended for, the maintenance or improvement of wildlife habitat. These include extensive agricultural uses such as grain production and grazing. Intensive agricultural activities involving removal or persistent plowing of natural vegetation and maintenance of fallow land during part of the year should not be permitted. |

Resources Chapter

- RS.P-14: Agricultural uses consistent with protection of the Suisun Marsh, such as grazing and grain production, should be maintained in the Secondary Management Area. In the event such uses become infeasible, other uses compatible with protection of the Marsh should be permitted.
- RS.P-15: In marsh areas, the County shall encourage the formation and retention of parcels of sufficient size to preserve valuable tidal marshes, seasonal marshes, managed wetlands and contiguous grassland areas for the protection of aquatic and wildlife habitat.
- RS.P-16 The County shall ensure that development in the County occurs in a manner which minimizes impacts of earth disturbance, erosion and water pollution.
- RS.P-17: The County shall preserve the riparian vegetation along significant County waterways in order to maintain water quality and wildlife habitat values.
- RS.P-18: The County shall ensure that public access at appropriate locations is provided and protected along the county's significant waterways within the Suisun Marsh.
- RS.P-19: Within the watershed of the Suisun Marsh, the County shall encourage sound agricultural practices which conserve water quality and the riparian vegetation.

Sacramento–San Joaquin Delta Policies

The following policies apply specifically to the Delta area. These resource policies are more specific to address the requirements of the *Delta Protection Plan*.

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- RS.P-20: The goals, policies, and provisions of the Land Use and Resource Management Plan for the Primary Zone of the Delta are incorporated by reference. Ensure that all public and private management and development activities within the Primary Zone of the Delta are consistent with the goals, policies and provisions of the Land Use and Resource Management Plan for the Primary Zone of the Delta as adopted and as may be amended by the Delta Protection Commission.
- RS.P-21: Preserve and protect the natural resources of the Delta including soils and riparian habitat. Lands managed primarily for wildlife habitat should be managed to provide inter-related habitats.
- RS.P-22: Promote seasonal flooding and agricultural practices on agricultural lands in cooperation with landowners that

Resources Chapter

incorporated "best management practices" to maximize wildlife use of lands in the Delta.

- RS.P-23: Ensure that extension of new utilities and infrastructure facilities, including those that support uses and development outside the Delta is consistent with the Land Use and Resource Management Plan for the Primary Zone of the Delta. Where construction of new utility and infrastructure facilities is appropriate, the effects of such new construction on the integrity of levees, wildlife, and agriculture activities shall be minimized to the extent feasible.
- RS.P-24: Protect the unique character and qualities of the Primary Zone by preserving the cultural heritage and the strong agricultural base.
- RS.P-25: Support long-term viability of commercial agriculture and discourage inappropriate development of agricultural lands within the Delta. Prohibit new residential, commercial, and industrial uses inconsistent with the Land Use and Resource Management Plan for the Primary Zone of the Delta.
- RS.P-26: Promote continued recreational use of the land and waters of the Delta, including fishing and boating; ensure needed recreational facilities are constructed, maintained, and supervised; protect landowners from unauthorized recreational uses on private lands; and maximize dwindling public funds for recreation by promoting public private partnerships and multiple uses of Delta lands consistent with the Land Use and Resource Management Plan for the Primary Zone of the Delta.
- RS.P-27: Support the improvement and long-term maintenance of Delta levees to preserve land areas and channel configurations in the Delta by coordinating permit reviews, and guidelines for levee maintenance; supporting development of a long-term funding program for levee maintenance; protecting levees in emergency situations; and giving levee rehabilitation and maintenance priority over other uses of levee areas.
- RS.P-28: Protect long-term water quality in the Delta in coordination with water agencies at local, state, and federal levels for designated beneficial uses, including agriculture, municipal, water-dependent industrial, water-contact recreation, boating and fish and wildlife habitat.
- RS.P-29: Support marine patrol, boater education, and safety programs to the extent financially feasible and in coordination with the U.S. Coast Guard and state and local agencies with jurisdiction with the Delta.

Resources Chapter

In addition to the specific Delta policies, the Agriculture chapter has a number of policies similar to the agricultural policies in the Delta Plan. The Agriculture chapter identifies 10 agricultural regions based on the Agriculture Futures Study completed by UC Davis Agricultural Issues Center. They include Ryer Island area and the Elmira and Maine Prairie area a portion of which is in the Primary Delta. Pursuant to Agriculture chapter implementation programs, strategic plans will be prepared for each agricultural region through a community based process that will address the specific issues for each region.

White Slough Specific Plan Area Policies

The following policies apply specifically to the *White Slough Specific Plan* area. These resource policies are proposed to address the requirements of the *White Slough Specific Plan*.

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| RS.P-30: | Ensure that marsh restoration activities and land use development within the White Slough area is consistent with the <i>White Slough Specific Plan</i> . |
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| RS.P-31: | Facilitate the acquisition of remaining privately owned parcels/development rights within the <i>White Slough Specific Plan</i> area. |

Napa Sonoma Marsh Restoration Project Policy

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| RS.P-32: | Require marsh restoration activities and land use development within the Napa Sonoma Marsh Restoration Project area to be consistent with the requirements of the Napa Sonoma Marsh Restoration Project. |
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Implementation Programs

Regulations

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| RS.I-12 | Review and update the Solano County component of the <i>Suisun Marsh Local Protection Program</i> in coordination with the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission. The guidelines and standards identified in current policies should be incorporated into the County Zoning Ordinance and development guidelines. The update will address General Plan policies and other policies, programs and regulations within the local protection program. |
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Related Policies: RS.P-10 to RS.P-19, RS.P-57, RS.P-58

Agency/Department: Department of Resource Management

Funding Source: General Fund

Time Frame: 2011

RS.I-13: Incorporate wind turbine guidelines, addressing development of wind turbines in the Suisun Marsh, into the County code and development guidelines. Wind turbines were not addressed in the *Suisun Marsh Protection Plan*.

Related Policy: RS.P-14

Agency/Department: Department of Resource Management

Funding Source: General Fund

Time Frame: Ongoing

Ongoing Planning Efforts, Public Outreach and Education

RS.I-14: Promote seasonal flooding and agricultural practices on agricultural lands in cooperation with landowners to maximize wildlife use of lands in the Delta. Explore incentive programs to encourage land owner participation.

Related Policies: RS.P-8, RS.P-22

Agency/Department: Department of Resource Management

Funding Source: General Fund

Time Frame: Ongoing

Coordination with Other Agencies and Organizations

RS.I-15: Coordinate with existing plans and programs regarding the San Francisco Bay, Sacramento River, Sacramento–San Joaquin Delta, and adjacent marsh areas including:

- the *Suisun Marsh Protection Plan*,
- the Napa Sonoma Marsh Restoration Project,
- the CALFED Bay-Delta Protection Program, and
- White Slough Specific Plan – Complete the exchange of land between the City of Vallejo and the County through the annexation and deannexation of lands as set forth in the *White Slough Specific Plan* and change land use designations as called for in the *White Slough Specific Plan*.

Related Policies: RS.P-7 to RS.P-32

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Time Frame: Ongoing

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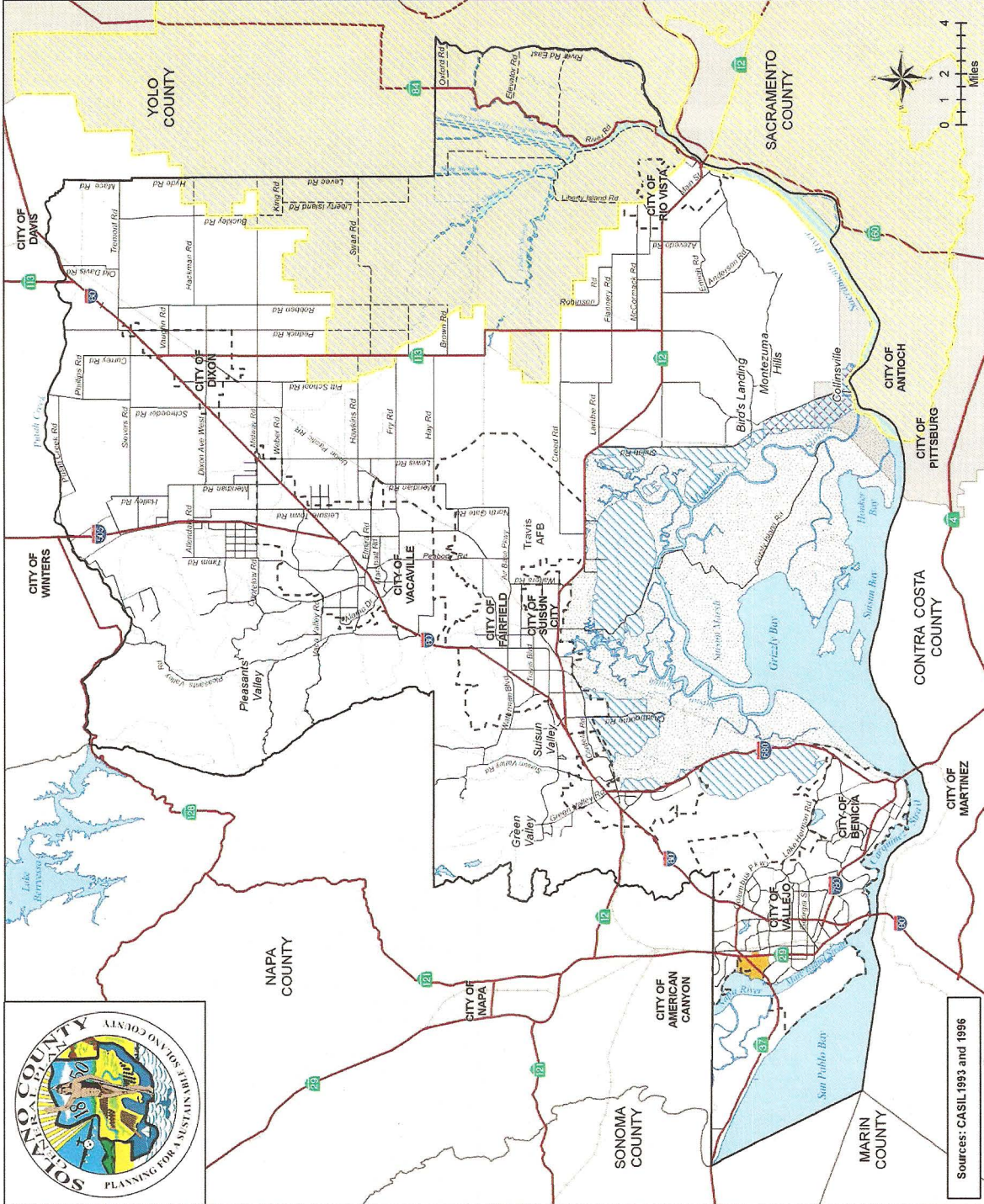
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Solano County General Plan

Figure RS-3

Delta and Marsh Protection Areas

- Legend**
- White Slough Planning Area
 - Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Protection Areas
 - Delta Primary Zone
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Sources: CASIL 1993 and 1996

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| RS.P-13: | Agriculture within the Primary Management Area of the Suisun Marsh should be limited to activities compatible with, or intended for, the maintenance or improvement of wildlife habitat. These include extensive agricultural uses such as grain production and grazing. Intensive agricultural activities involving removal or persistent plowing of natural vegetation and maintenance of fallow land during part of the year should not be permitted. |

Resources Chapter

- RS.P-14: Agricultural uses consistent with protection of the Suisun Marsh, such as grazing and grain production, should be maintained in the Secondary Management Area. In the event such uses become infeasible, other uses compatible with protection of the Marsh should be permitted.
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- RS.P-21: Preserve and protect the natural resources of the Delta including soils and riparian habitat. Lands managed primarily for wildlife habitat should be managed to provide inter-related habitats.
- RS.P-22: Promote seasonal flooding and agricultural practices on agricultural lands in cooperation with landowners that

incorporated "best management practices" to maximize wildlife use of lands in the Delta.

- RS.P-23: Ensure that extension of new utilities and infrastructure facilities, including those that support uses and development outside the Delta is consistent with the Land Use and Resource Management Plan for the Primary Zone of the Delta. Where construction of new utility and infrastructure facilities is appropriate, the effects of such new construction on the integrity of levees, wildlife, and agriculture activities shall be minimized to the extent feasible.
- RS.P-24: Protect the unique character and qualities of the Primary Zone by preserving the cultural heritage and the strong agricultural base.
- RS.P-25: Support long-term viability of commercial agriculture and discourage inappropriate development of agricultural lands within the Delta. Prohibit new residential, commercial, and industrial uses inconsistent with the Land Use and Resource Management Plan for the Primary Zone of the Delta.
- RS.P-26: Promote continued recreational use of the land and waters of the Delta, including fishing and boating; ensure needed recreational facilities are constructed, maintained, and supervised; protect landowners from unauthorized recreational uses on private lands; and maximize dwindling public funds for recreation by promoting public private partnerships and multiple uses of Delta lands consistent with the Land Use and Resource Management Plan for the Primary Zone of the Delta.
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- RS.P-29: Support marine patrol, boater education, and safety programs to the extent financially feasible and in coordination with the U.S. Coast Guard and state and local agencies with jurisdiction with the Delta.

Resources Chapter

In addition to the specific Delta policies, the Agriculture chapter has a number of policies similar to the agricultural policies in the Delta Plan. The Agriculture chapter identifies 10 agricultural regions based on the Agriculture Futures Study completed by UC Davis Agricultural Issues Center. They include Ryer Island area and the Elmira and Maine Prairie area a portion of which is in the Primary Delta. Pursuant to Agriculture chapter implementation programs, strategic plans will be prepared for each agricultural region through a community based process that will address the specific issues for each region.

White Slough Specific Plan Area Policies

The following policies apply specifically to the *White Slough Specific Plan* area. These resource policies are proposed to address the requirements of the *White Slough Specific Plan*.

- RS.P-30:

Ensure that marsh restoration activities and land use development within the White Slough area is consistent with the *White Slough Specific Plan*.
- RS.P-31:

Facilitate the acquisition of remaining privately owned parcels/development rights within the *White Slough Specific Plan* area.

Napa Sonoma Marsh Restoration Project Policy

- RS.P-32:

Require marsh restoration activities and land use development within the Napa Sonoma Marsh Restoration Project area to be consistent with the requirements of the Napa Sonoma Marsh Restoration Project.

Implementation Programs

Regulations

- RS.I-12

Review and update the Solano County component of the *Suisun Marsh Local Protection Program* in coordination with the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission. The guidelines and standards identified in current policies should be incorporated into the County Zoning Ordinance and development guidelines. The update will address General Plan policies and other policies, programs and regulations within the local protection program.

Related Policies: RS.P-10 to RS.P-19, RS.P-57, RS.P-58

Agency/Department: Department of Resource Management

Funding Source: General Fund

Time Frame: 2011

RS.I-13: Incorporate wind turbine guidelines, addressing development of wind turbines in the Suisun Marsh, into the County code and development guidelines. Wind turbines were not addressed in the *Suisun Marsh Protection Plan*.

Related Policy: RS.P-14

Agency/Department: Department of Resource Management

Funding Source: General Fund

Time Frame: Ongoing

Ongoing Planning Efforts, Public Outreach and Education

RS.I-14: Promote seasonal flooding and agricultural practices on agricultural lands in cooperation with landowners to maximize wildlife use of lands in the Delta. Explore incentive programs to encourage land owner participation.

Related Policies: RS.P-8, RS.P-22

Agency/Department: Department of Resource Management

Funding Source: General Fund

Time Frame: Ongoing

Coordination with Other Agencies and Organizations

RS.I-15: Coordinate with existing plans and programs regarding the San Francisco Bay, Sacramento River, Sacramento–San Joaquin Delta, and adjacent marsh areas including:

- the *Suisun Marsh Protection Plan*,
- the Napa Sonoma Marsh Restoration Project,
- the CALFED Bay-Delta Protection Program, and
- White Slough Specific Plan – Complete the exchange of land between the City of Vallejo and the County through the annexation and deannexation of lands as set forth in the *White Slough Specific Plan* and change land use designations as called for in the *White Slough Specific Plan*.

Related Policies: RS.P-7 to RS.P-32

Agency/Department: Department of Resource Management

Funding Source: General Fund

Time Frame: Ongoing